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Message Text

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 283025 ACTION SAIGON 28 DEC

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS:PFOR, US, VS, CB
SUBJECT: HABIB PRESS INTERVIEW

IN BACKGROUND SESSION WITH VALERIANI (NBC) AND MARDER (WP) DEC. 26, HABIB MADE FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST ON VIETNAM IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS:

1. SOVIET MILITARY MISSION NOW IN HANOI PRESUMABLY IS NEGOTIATING MILITARY AID PACKAGE. HOWEVER, COMMUNISTS NEVER ANNOUNCE PRECISE RESULTS AND OUR INFO ON SOVIET AND CHINESE AID TO HANOI IS NOW NOT UP TO DATE OR AS ACCURATE AS IN PAST YEARS. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THERE ARE SOME WHO HOPE THAT USSR AND PRC ARE HOLDING DOWN ON DELIVERIES, NVN APPEARS TO HAVE SUFFICIENT SUPPLIES TO SUSTAIN A HIGH LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY.
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2. HANOI CONTINUED TO BUILD STOCKS IN SVN AFTER PARIS AGREEMENT, EG; TANKS, ARTILLERY, SAMS, ETC., AND COULD MAINTAIN CURRENT HIGH COMBAT LEVEL FOR QUITE SOME TIME. MORE IS AVAILABLE IN NVN, READILY TRANSPORTABLE DOWN ALL-WEATHER ROADS. HABIB UNDERTOOK TO OBTAIN BEST POSSIBLE USG ESTIMATES OF OUTSIDE MILITARY AND ECON AID TO HANOI FOR 1974. (WE SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED VALERIANI/ MARDER THAT CURRENT ESTIMATES OF FOREIGN ECON AID TO HANOI FOR 1974 RUN ABOUT ONE BILLION TO 1.2 BILLION DOLS.)

MILITARY AID ESTIMATE NOT YET AVAILABLE, BUT INDICATIONS ARE THAT IT IS SUBSTANTIAL AND WE WILL PROVIDE FIGURE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. HABIB SAID LEVEL OF HOSTILITIES FOR LAST FEW WEEKS HAS BEEN HIGHEST SINCE PARIS AGREEMENTS, BUT HAS NOT REACHED SPRING 1972 PEAK. SVN FORCES ARE FIGHTING WELL DESPITE LOSSES SUFFERED, SOME OF WHICH ARE DUE TO NEED TO CONSERVE AMMO, FUEL AND EQUIPMENT. THERE HAVE BEEN SO;E TACTICAL LOSSES AS FIGHTING SEE-SAWS, BUT NO MAJOR STRATEGIC LOSSES. ARVN CAN HANDLE COMBAT; PROBLEM IS MAINTAINING SUPPLIES AND SUPPLY LINES; THIS DEPENDS ON CONGRESS. HE COULD NOT SAY AT THIS POINT WHETHER WE WILL ASK FOR MORE FUNDS FROM NEW CONGRESS BUT WE WILL CERTAINLY GIVE CONGRESS ALL THE FACTS. HE REPEATED THAT PROBLEM IS NOT VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S WILLINGNESS TO RESIST COMMUNISTS -- ON THAT DOUBTS HAVE BEEN LAID TO REST. THOSE WHO THOUGHT SOUTH VIETNAMESE WERE TOO WAR-WEARY TO GO ON AFTER US PULLED OUT MISJUDGED. GVN WILL NEED RESOURCES, HOWEVER, WHICH ARE BEING USED UP FAR FASTER THAN US REPLENISHMENT, DESPITE GVN'S DRASTIC EFFORTS TO ECONOMIZE.

4. ASKED WHETHER WE EXPECT COMMUNISTS TO MAINTAIN CURRENT FIGHTING LEVEL FOR LONG, HABIB SAID ASSUMPTION IS THAT THEY WILL DO SO IF COSVN '75 PLANS IMPLEMENTED.

5. ON INTERNAL SITUATION, HABIB NOTED THIEU HAD TAKEN CERTAIN PERSONNEL MEASURES, AND US PRESS HAS BEGUN TO REFLECT FACT THAT INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IS CALM-
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ING DOWN AS MOVEMENTS OF VARIOUS RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION GROUPS LOSE STEAM.

6. ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS AGREEMENT, HABIB SAID:

A. OTHER SIDE HAS VIOLATED ONE-FOR-ONE REPLENISHMENT CONDITION EVER SINCE C-F TOOK EFFECT; US HAS COMPLIED WITH THIS PROVISION, AS IT DID WITH REQUIREMENT TO WITHDRAW US

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ARMED FORCES-AND ADVISORS. IN-FACT US REPLENISHMENT
IS BELOW LEVELS AUTHORIZEDBY AGREEMENT.

B. OTHER SIDE REFUSES TO PROVIDE INFO ON MIAS ON
GROUNDS THAT US IS NOT FULFILLING OBLIGATION TO AID NVN.
COMMUNISTS, HOWEVER, WERE REQUIRED UNDER AGREEMENT TO
PROVIDE INFO ON MIAS, WITHOUT CAVEAT.

C. ONE CORNERSTONE OF PARIS AGREEMENT WAS OBLIGATION

FOR BOTH VIETNAMESE SIDES TO NEGOTIATE. COMMUNISTS NOW
DEMAND THIEU'S REMOVAL AS PRE-CONDITION FOR FURTHER
MEETINGS, WHICH IS UNREASONABLE, CONTRARY TO AGREEMENT,
AND STANDS IN CLEAR CONTRAST TO SVN READINESS TO TALK TO
THE OTHER SIDE WITHOUT PRE-CONDITIONS.

D. NVN IS ENGAGED IN A MAJOR ESCALATION OF THE
FIGHTING IN VIOLATION OF AGREEMENT, SEEKING THEREBY TO
GAIN MILITARY SUCCESSES BECAUSE COMMUNISTS HAVE FOUND
NO POLITICAL SUCCESS. NVN FORCES IN SOUTH ARE LARGER
THAN AT TIME OF AGREEMENT AND BETTER EQUIPPED.

8. IN RESPONSE TO POINT MADE BY VALERIANI AND MARDER
SEVERAL TIMES, TO EFFECT THAT NEXT CONGRESS WILL BE
EXTREMELY TOUGH ON AID TO INDOCHINA, HABIB REITERATED
THAT WE MUST FACE UP TO SITUATION, NOT JUST WALK AWAY
FROM IT. WE MUST CONVINCE CONGRESS, PRESS AND PUBLIC
OF THE FACTS AND, IF WE WORK AT IT, WE SHOULD BE ABLE
TO GET WHAT IS NEEDED. AS PRESIDENT HAS MADE CLEAR, WE
HAVE OBLIGATION TO FULFILL. THERE IS DANGER THAT US
WILL RETRENCH IN EA, IN TERMS OF RESOURCES AND ATENTION,
TO POINT WHERE WE CANNOT PURSUE LOGICAL, VIABLE FOREIGN
POLICIES. IF CONGRESS CAN PROVIDE TWO BILLION FOR
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VN - A DRASTIC DROP FROM THE PAST - WE WILL GET BY. THE
POLICY IS WORTH PURSUING AND USG OUGHT TO HAVE THE
WHEREWITHAL TO SUPPORT IT. BROWN UNQUOTE SISCO

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